Consulate General. At present construction activity of the office is underway and additional staffing of both Canadian and India-based employees is expected to proceed gradually until the official opening of the Consulate General in early 2004.

Relief materials to Iraq

5046. DR. DASARINARAYANARAO:
DR. ABRAR AHMED:
SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN:
SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) Whether Government have assessed the likely impact of US and allied forces attack on Iraq on the United Nations and NAM;

(b) If so, the details thereof;

(c) Whether Government propose to send relief materials such as medicines, food, clothing etc. to Iraq on humanitarian grounds; and

(d) If so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) and (b) Yes, the war against Iraq, without the authorization of the UN Security Council, has shown the divisions and divergences among member-states of UN and also within NAM.

(c) and (d) In response to the UN emergency appeal, Government has announced a contribution of $20 million in cash and kind including 50,000MT of wheat. The Government is in contact with the relevant UN agencies for delivery of these materials.

Visa for Chinese tourist groups

5047. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has plans to grant visa for Chinese tourist groups within 24 hours if their visa papers are in order; and

(b) if so, the objective behind this special concession?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA): (a) and (b) The Memorandum of Understanding signed between India's Department of Tourism and the National Tourism Administration of China in New Delhi on 8th December, 2002 requests the Indian